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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL POMEROY MEETING WITH AMAR AL-HAKIM

Classified By: PolCouns Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a December 3 meeting with Syed Amar al-Hakim, son of ISCI head Abdulaziz al-Hakim, Codel Pomeroy heard that there are signs of security, economic, and even political improvement in Iraq. Syed Amar said the Strategic Partnership Declaration (SPD) proved that a large portion of the Iraqi people "know what is good for Iraq." In response to Codel queries, Hakim said Iraqis understand the impatience of the American people with the slow pace of political progress. Iraqis also want to see reliance on Coalition Forces for security to end, but he cautioned, "finish the mission, and even then stay engaged with us on economic and political issues." End Summary.

¶2. (U) Codel Pomeroy (Rep. Earl Pomeroy, D-ND; Rep. Ron Kind, D-WI; Rep. Christopher Shays, R-CT; Rep. Earl Perlmutter, D-CO; and Rep. Brian Baird, D-WA) met on December 3 with Amar al-Hakim, leader-in-waiting of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). Hakim was joined by four members of the ISCI/Badr bloc in the Council of Representatives: Dr. Jenan al-Obeidi of the Health Committee, Layla al-Khafaji of the Citizens Complaint Committee, Mona Zalzal of the Finance Committee, and Hadi al-Amri, Chairman of the Security and Defense Committee.

¶3. (C) After welcoming the Codel, Amar al-Hakim, stated that he did not want to exaggerate the positive, but the security, economic, and even political situation was improving. As examples of Iraqis' desire for reconciliation across sectarian divides, he discussed his successful visit to the Sunni stronghold of Ramadi, and a visit of Sunni religious scholars to Najaf. The Sunnis were initially nervous about the welcome they would receive, but their trepidation was quickly overcome by the warm welcome they received from merchants and ordinary people in Najaf. At the political leadership level, Syed Amar stated, "things get complicated", but he felt certain that as the security situation improved, the leaders would begin to move the political process forward more quickly.

¶4. (C) Congressman Pomeroy asked for an assessment of the strength of Iraqi identity over sectarian identity and observed that Iran seemed intent on promoting sectarianism at Iraq's expense. Syed Amar, without mentioning Iran (or Saudi Arabia) by name, agreed that the actions of Iraq's neighbors had affected the internal situation. "Some neighbors are fearful of the concentration of U.S. forces...others are concerned by the introduction of democracy." He said that the situation with the neighbors was showing some improvement. The GOI was telling its neighbors that it is unacceptable to promote conflict on Iraqi soil and that dialogue must be used to resolve political differences.

¶5. (C) Congressman Baird asked about evidence that Sunnis and Shi'ites were reconciling. Syed Amar said there was less progress than one could hope for, but nonetheless, some things were happening. ISCI was in dialogue with the Sunni Arab Tawafuq Front to encourage their return to government,

The Accountability and Justice law (i.e the de-Ba'ath law) had received a second reading in the CoR. A provincial powers law agreeable to all parties was close to completion. Finally, he praised signature of the Strategic Partnership Declaration and said that this proved that there was a large sector of the Iraqi people supportive of the relationship with the U.S. and committed to the larger interests of Iraq.

¶6. (C) The three female members of the CoR present introduced themselves and spoke positively about recent travel to the U.S. and opportunities to observe the U.S. Congress in session. Each described her priority interests within the CoR. Finance committee member Mona Zalzal said her committee had recently marked a significant achievement with passage of a reformed pension law that restored pension rights to former Ba'ath party members.

¶7. (C) Congressman Perlmutter stressed U.S. desire to help Iraq and then to go home. Congressman Kind cautioned that the patience of the American people was getting short and that Iraqi leaders needed to make progress quickly. Syed Amar closed the meeting by stating that the Iraqi people were also impatient for political progress from their leaders. His request to the U.S. was to finish the mission, but stay engaged afterwards as an economic and political partner.
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